INTRODUCTION

All in the golden afternoon
  Full leisurely we glide;
For both our oars, with little skill,
  By little arms are plied,
While little hands make vain pretence
  Our wanderings to guide.

Ah, cruel Three! In such an hour,
  Beneath such dreamy weather,
To beg a tale of breath too weak
  To stir the tiniest feather!
Yet what can one poor voice avail
  Against three tongues together?

Imperious Prima flashes forth
  Her edict to "begin it"—
In gentler tones Secunda hopes
  "There will be nonsense in it"—
While Tertia interrupts the tale
  Not *more* than once a minute.

Anon, to sudden silence won,
  In fancy they pursue
The dream-child moving through a land
  Of wonders wild and new,
In friendly chat with bird or beast—
  And half believe it true.

LEWIS CARROLL *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Illustrated by Bessie Pease Gutmann) LONDON, (1948?) THE BURSTEIN COLLECTION Octavo